



Working in a team

Whether you are allocated to a group for an assignment or forming a study group with friends, teamwork is an important part of your learning experience at UWA India.

Knowing how to work effectively in a team environment is a key skill for you to develop and will be valuable for your career.

Set your team up for success by creating a team agreement setting out the team's expectations of its members. Refer to our academic skills resources for a team agreement template.

Aim to do this at the start, at your first team meeting. Ensure everyone is included in creating and signing the agreement, then share the document so everyone has a copy.

This is your team's foundation document; you can refer back to it to remind each other what you committed to, and it will help you resolve any conflicts if they arise.

Team meetings

In your first team meeting, find out each member's skills and preferred way of working; the team will operate more effectively if members know their skills and preferences are respected.

Schedule regular meetings, and:

- discuss what works best for team members – for example, Zoom, Teams or in-person meetings
- appoint a meeting convener/chair, a timekeeper and a notetaker for each meeting
- rotate meeting roles so everyone gets to chair, take minutes, etc.

At each meeting:

- report on progress
- list any action items and the person responsible
- set a time and place for the next meeting
- allocate meeting roles for the next meeting.

Keep a record of tasks, who they are allocated to and due dates. Make sure each team member has a copy and make this prominent at each meeting.

Prioritise communication

Essential communication skills for working in a team

- **Negotiating:** involve the whole team in negotiating tasks, deadlines and decisions.
- **Listening:** make space for everyone to contribute and hear them out without interrupting.
- **Giving feedback:** provide encouragement, constructive criticism, recommendations and praise.
- **Consulting:** involve every member in decision-making, seek consensus and common objectives, collaborate.
- **Problem-solving:** involve everyone in finding workable solutions to problems.

Make sure everyone in the team is included in team communications.

Your role

Being a good team member

- **Be accountable:** report back to the group, attend team meetings, take responsibility within the team.
- **Be assertive:** negotiate for roles and tasks; don't accept being side-lined or allocated roles without being consulted!
- **Be constructive:** encourage other members, give constructive criticism when necessary, suggest solutions to problems.
- **Be supportive of other team members:** check in with other team members, find out how they're going, be prepared to help.
- **Be respectful:** avoid dismissing others' ideas or criticising team members – be constructive and courteous.
- **Deliver what you promise:** but re-negotiate tasks or deadlines if necessary.

Dealing with conflict

Conflicts sometimes arise; however, they can usually be resolved within the team.

Refer to your team agreement to remind yourselves of the team's expectations you established at the start.

Creating a team culture where everyone feels heard and respected minimises the likelihood of conflict and makes it easier to resolve conflicts when they do arise. Aim to build trust and a sense of belonging within your team and to resolve conflicts through team discussion. If this becomes impossible, seek external help (for example, from your Unit Coordinator).